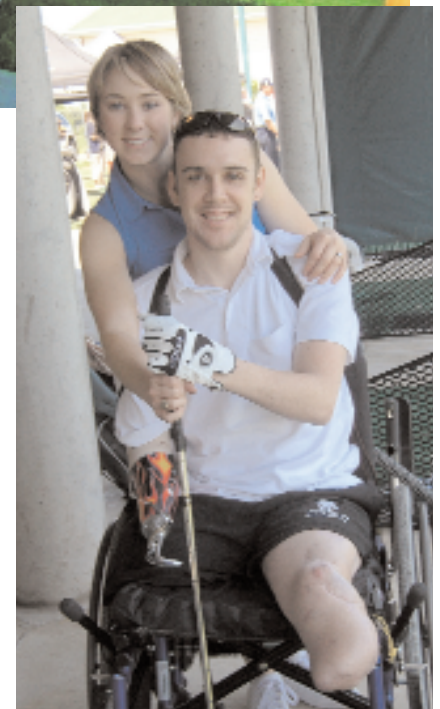


“Fore” a Good Cause

by Jennifer G. Williams

The idea was simple:
rehabilitating soldiers, mostly
amputees, returning from the
war zone needed something to
do to stay active and to take
their minds off their injuries.



Walter Reed Army Medical Center volunteer and Vietnam veteran Billy Bartlett thought golf might just be the key.

He approached Tim Landres, owner of the Olney Golf Park in nearby Maryland last year, asking if the soldiers could perhaps get a discount when playing there. Landres went a few steps further—the soldiers, he said, could hit balls for free.

Landres then discussed the situation with PGA Professional Jim Estes, who happens to be Olney Golf Park's director of instruction. Estes and his staff offered to work with the soldiers on their own time—and at no cost.

In May, Landres held a veterans appreciation day at Olney Golf Park, the first of the park's initiatives to help soldiers injured in the War on Terror. "Giving for Golf" raised more than \$20,000 for the equipment needed by the participants, including special golf clubs and golf carts.

Bartlett calls former Army Spec. Sean Estes "kinda the inspiration" for the program which now has about 20 participants. "Sean was the first one asked when we started this program," says Bartlett, who recalls Estes' first reaction as, "Golf? Yeah, right."

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Bartlett admits it was a challenge to initially convince some of the soldiers—most of whom had never played golf before—to give the game a try. Once he took Estes—whose leg was amputated after being critically injured in a mortar attack in Iraq—to the range, Bartlett says Sean tried hitting a few balls while wearing his prosthetic leg. He quickly decided the leg was getting in his way and removed it before hitting the balls on his one leg, which he found more comfortable.

Olney Golf Park plans to continue its support and fundraising for the rehabilitating soldiers, with hopes for future events to benefit this cause. The Disabled Veterans of America (DAV) is also involved in accepting tax-deductible donations for the program. For more information, visit www.thegolfparks.com.



